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Written on June 17, 2015 at 6:00 am by [svanderwerff](#)

[Navy Hospital Corps Birthday Message 2015](#)

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The Navy Hospital Corps is the largest and most decorated rate in the Navy.



On behalf of Navy Medicine, I extend my sincerest thanks and appreciation to the Navy Hospital Corps commemorating 117 years of faithful and committed service.

President William McKinley signed an act of Congress in 1898 establishing the Hospital Corps. Since the first 25 apothecaries were appointed by the secretary of the Navy, the Hospital Corps has grown immeasurably in size and scope.

Today, we honor their bravery, brilliance and sacrifice while serving in harm's way to protect the lives of our Sailors and Marines. From the Revolutionary War to current overseas operations, corpsmen have served heroically and gallantly.

They stand ready to heed the call, "corpsman up," tending to the sick and injured on the sea, under the sea, in the air and on the battlefield.

No Marine has ever taken a hill without a corpsman, and when they do, they take comfort knowing that "doc" is by their side.

In 1902, corpsmen learned their profession at the Navy's first corps school at Naval Hospital Portsmouth.

Today, they receive extensive training at Navy Medicine Education and Training Command in Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and the quality of their training has not changed. It's evident that corpsmen are selflessly dedicated to caring for patients worldwide. Because of their exceptional and comprehensive training, we are experiencing the lowest battle mortality and non-battle injury rates in the history of war.

The Navy Hospital Corps is the largest and most decorated rate in the Navy. Twenty-two corpsmen have received Medals of Honor, among many other awards. Additionally, 20 naval ships have been named in honor of corpsmen worldwide. Since the end of World War I, 178 corpsmen have been awarded the Navy Cross. During the Vietnam War alone, corpsmen were awarded four medals of honor, 31 navy crosses, 179 silver stars, and 292 bronze stars for heroism while under fire. This recognition is a humbling testament to the quality of character and integrity of the men and women proudly wearing the caduceus and answer to "doc."

Today we pay our admiration to their courage in battle; the empathy they provide to those in need during humanitarian assistance and disaster response efforts; their desire to do the right thing; and their outstanding commitment to mission readiness at our military treatment facilities across the globe. These heroic individuals ensure our nation has a medically-ready, fighting force, while providing compassionate patient and family-centered health care.

To the more than 30,000 active duty and reserve corpsmen globally, thank you for your steadfast and fearless service at home and overseas. Happy birthday Hospital Corps!

M.L. NATHAN/ SG SENDS

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